Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee

of the

World Council of Churches

26 – 29 September 2000

Meeting held at the

Ecumenical Center, Geneva, Switzerland

These minutes have no official status until received, amended as necessary and approved by the Executive Committee at its next meeting. The official proceedings of the Executive Committee consist of a documented record of decisions taken by the Committee along with the texts of documents acted upon. The introductions to agenda items and summaries of presentations and discussions are prepared by the minute-taker for background information only, and should not be cited as part of the official proceedings of the meeting nor as such attributed to the speakers' names.

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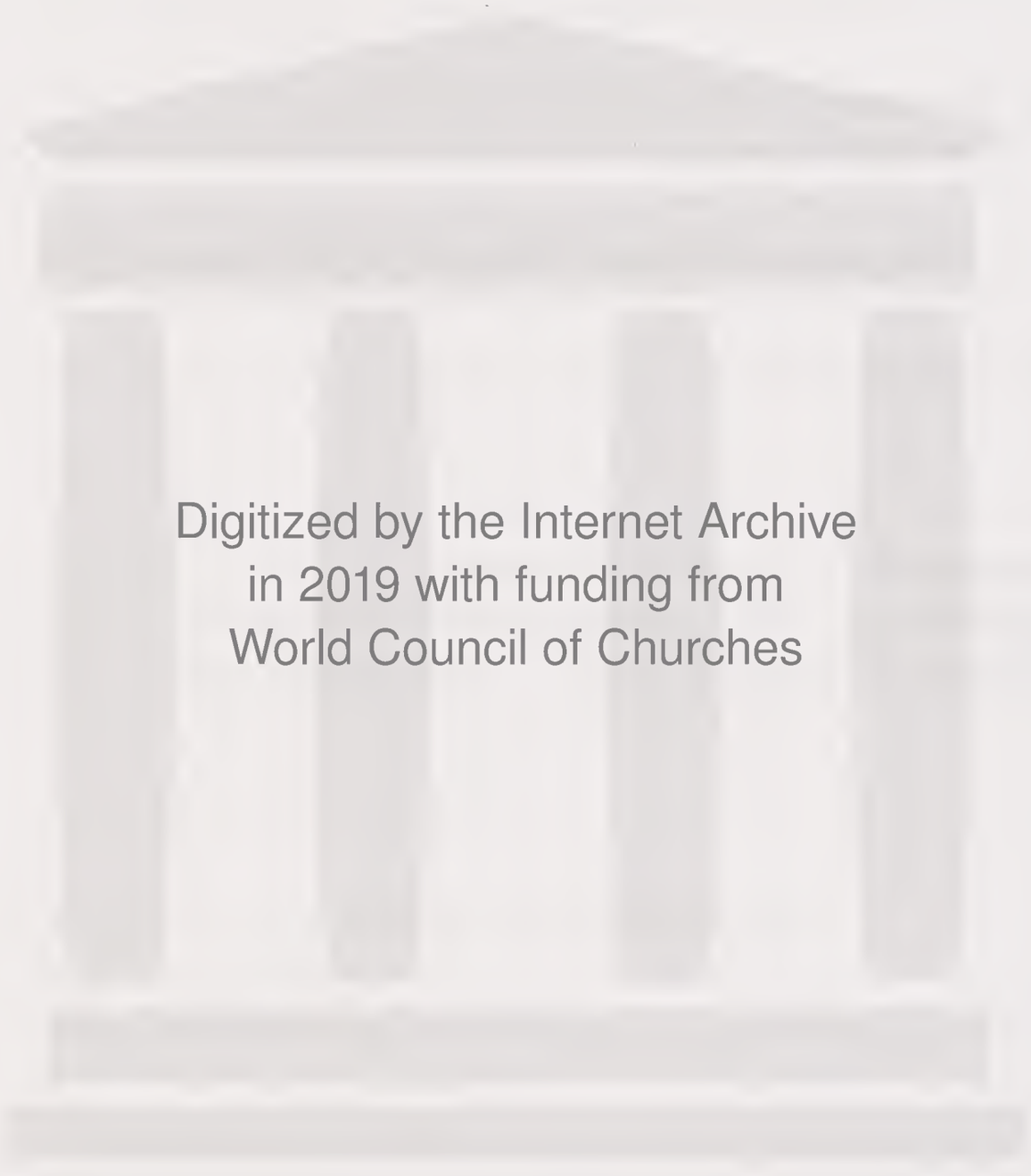

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World Council of Churches

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held at the Ecumenical Center, Geneva

26 – 29 September 2000

1. OPENING ACTIONS

1.1 Worship

Morning worship was led by members of the Executive Committee each day in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Center. The prayers for the first morning were taken from the Order of Worship in Remembrance of, and Thanksgiving for, the Life of Marlin VanElderen.

1.2 Call to Order and Welcome

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, called the meeting to order at 9.10 hours on Tuesday, 26 February 2000. He welcomed all participants. He then referred to the strong ecumenical commitment of Marlin VanElderen.

1.3 Roll Call

The General Secretary called the roll of members present and noted apologies from Mrs. Justice Sophia Adinyira, Rev. Dr. Hilarion Alfeyev, Ms. Abigail O. Ogunsanya, Rev. Dr. Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere and Bishop McKinley Young. The Executive Committee agreed that the Rev. Fr. Mikhail Gundyaev could substitute for the Rev. Dr. Hilarion Alfeyev.

1.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last Executive Committee meeting, held at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Switzerland, 29 February – 3 March 2000, were approved as printed.

1.5 Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

The General Secretary introduced the proposed Agenda and timetable which were adopted with some minor changes. He mentioned the Centennial Commemoration of the birth of Dr. Visser 't Hooft on Thursday, 28 September, to which the members of the Executive Committee were invited.

2. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

2.1 General

The General Secretary reported that it had proved to be a wise decision to have 18 months between the first two meetings of the

Central Committee. This allowed for the implementation of the organizational and methodological changes and the development of the new programmatic framework.

All newly appointed Commissions and Advisory Groups have had their first meetings. Mandates have been reviewed and plans for activities confirmed. There has been excellent participation.

The planning cycle for 2001 was completed in time for a first meeting of the WCC round table with funding partners in April 2000. It is hoped to have such round table meetings annually. The intensive planning activity has strengthened the cooperation and interrelationship among the different teams and with external partners.

With the arrival of new staff, new approaches to institutional development in the areas of Human Resources, Income Monitoring Development, and Information Technology are taking shape.

During the last five months activity has been very intense in spite of many uncertainties in the world and in the ecumenical movement at large. The WCC is moving ahead with a clear sense of purpose.

2.2 Special Features

The General Secretary reported on some special features.

2.2.1 Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC: The four sub-committees have met. The second plenary meeting is planned for the end of October in Cairo. The Special

Commission will present an interim report to the Central Committee in January 2001 for discussion and future direction.
Two distinct emphases emerge:

- issues related to structure, constitution, membership, decision-making, etc.;
- issues arising from fundamental differences regarding ecclesiology, methodology, spirituality and ethos between the Orthodox churches and the other member churches of the WCC.

The two levels are closely interrelated. For the first time, the partners in the fellowship of the WCC are facing the underlying reason for the lack of mutual comprehension. The challenge goes far beyond structural and constitutional adjustments. It will be important for the Special Commission to go beyond pragmatic adjustments and thus penetrate to the core of the difficulties. The challenge must become clear and accessible to all member churches as a common task which would lead to changes in the agenda, the priorities and the ways of working of the WCC.

2.2.2 Relationship with the Roman Catholic Church: Dr. Raiser pointed out that the new Joint Working Group had its first plenary meeting in Antelias, Lebanon, in May 2000. The group examined and decided on the study process of three themes: "Ecclesiological Consequences of Baptism," "National and Regional Councils of Churches and Ecumenical Instruments," and "the Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue."

Reflections on "the Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue" received added pertinence through the recent declaration "Dominus Jesus" by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The declaration has been widely criticized. The WCC, however,

deliberately refrained from strong public criticism. It put its emphasis on the continuation of ecumenical dialogue, building on important gains since Vatican II which are not reflected in the declaration. In view of the challenges of the new century, apologetic doctrinal definitions must not prevent these efforts for common witness. There are obvious differences of positions and language within the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church.

2.2.3 Relationship with other Ecumenical Partners: Dr. Raiser referred to the reports regarding the LWF/WCC staff group, the proposal for a Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organizations, and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. Extending cooperation with ecumenical partners has been one of the CUV objectives.

Discussions with LWF have not brought immediate results, especially regarding joint Assemblies, but there are some proposals for cooperation.

A consultation on a Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organizations, held with representatives of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and organizations, showed that they were ready to explore steps towards the development of a Forum.

There is growing interest among the member churches and related organizations with regard to the proposed new mechanism for an "Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance." Its founding meeting will be held 7-9 December 2000 in Geneva. The role of the WCC is seen as that of a facilitator and coordinator.

2.2.4 Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders: The General Secretary reported that he had been invited by the UN to address the World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. For the first time spiritual leaders came together on the invitation of the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and met in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations in New York. Dr. Raiser underlined the importance of reflecting on the contribution of religious communities towards building a sustainable, just and peaceful world community. However, because of unbalanced representation, the conference had shown little concrete results.

2.2.5 Consultation on Religious Intolerance: Dr. Raiser pointed out that in light of the deteriorating situation in many Islamic countries where Christians are in a minority, the WCC had convened a consultation on "Religious Intolerance, the Political Manipulation of Religion and its Impact on Christian Minorities." A small group of church leaders from Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria, Sudan, Ghana and Sierra Leone discussed the situation of Christians in these countries, particularly those caught in the midst of conflicts with religious overtones.

2.2.6 Staff Changes: Dr. Raiser reported that since the last Executive Committee meeting 10 Executive staff, some in senior positions, have left the WCC. This large turn-over could be seen as an opportunity to integrate new, younger staff with fresh experiences. At the same time there is a need for staff training and development.

For many years Marlin VanElderen held the editorial position in a unique way. His sudden death leaves a painful gap and presents a great challenge, especially to the Cluster on Communication.

2.3 Travel and Visits

Since the last Executive Committee meeting the General Secretary had visited churches and ecumenical partners in the Philippines, India, Malaysia, Haiti, Lebanon, Armenia, Iceland, Sweden, and the Iona Community (Scotland). He also had meetings with the Council of the EKD in preparation for the Central Committee meeting in Berlin, and he addressed the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Elbia.

Representatives of Christian Aid, the Church of Sweden, Brot für die Welt, and a high-level delegation of the International Monetary Fund had visited the WCC.

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, thanked the General Secretary for his report.

He then informed the Executive Committee of his participation in a Conference of San Egidio in Lisbon, Portugal. In the opening session of the conference, His Holiness had expressed his concern about the strong reaction that the Vatican Declaration "Dominus Jesus" has created in the ecumenical community. He affirmed the crucial importance of ecumenical dialogue based on mutual respect, trust and understanding.

2.4 Discussion

The discussion which followed the General Secretary's presentation centered mainly around the Declaration "Dominus Jesus." Some of the comments made are as follows:

It was generally felt that the declaration is a reversal of progress made in ecumenical relations since Vatican II. It reflects however the basic teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and its claim to be the mother church. Regrets were expressed about the language and the tone used in the declaration. One proposal was that the WCC might react in a more substantial way through the Commission on Faith and Order. The ecumenical commitment of the WCC to dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church was affirmed. The WCC must continue to commit itself to visible unity, but it must also be realistic about the limitations of ecumenical dialogue.

3. REPORTS OF CLUSTER DIRECTORS

3.1 Cluster on Relations

Ms. Geneviève Jacques presented the report and highlighted the program activities of the four teams of the Cluster on Relations.

She pointed out that increased cooperation, both at inter-team level and with members of the ecumenical family, has been a major characteristic of the new working style. Intentional efforts are being developed to involve more partners within the ecumenical family in implementing activities and sharing responsibilities. There is an increased awareness of the role of communication in nurturing and deepening relationships.

These developments raise new questions. For example:

- how to deal constructively with contradictions arising from different approaches to complex issues such as inter-religious conflict (defense of human rights/dialogue), attitude towards international institutions (WB, IMF, WTO, etc.);

- how to equip members of the ecumenical family with the necessary information and ecumenical knowledge to enable them to share responsibilities;
- how to improve creatively our methods of communication?

3.1.1 Church and Ecumenical Relations

The activities of this team focus on developing the three constitutional priorities of the WCC that emerged from the CUV process: (1) strengthening and deepening the fellowship of member churches, (2) broadening and nurturing relationships with REOs, NCCs, CWCs, international organizations, and with non-member churches, and (3) promoting the coherence of the ecumenical movement. Specific references to these activities were made under separate items to members of the Executive Committee.

3.1.2 Inter-religious Relations and Dialogue

Religious plurality is a reality everywhere today and the question of inter-religious relations and interfaith dialogue has become increasingly urgent in the life of the churches. The WCC, therefore, cannot afford to absent itself from these discussions. It needs to articulate ecumenical perspectives, stimulate thinking in its member churches and open spaces for common reflection. The WCC is pursuing dialogue with concerned churches about how to promote relationships with people of other faith communities, especially in situations marked by conflict and tension. The WCC proposes to seek partnerships with study centers with a long history in inter-religious relations and dialogue, to identify discussion partners from other faiths, and to engage in issue-oriented conversations, specifically on how to articulate an inter-religious response to issues of common concern.

3.1.3 Regional Relations and Ecumenical Sharing

Ms. Jacques pointed out that the two main thrusts of this team are (1) to bring regional perspectives to the programmatic work of the WCC and (2) to bring an ecumenical global perspective to the regions, fostering coherent approaches and overcoming "regionalism" and "confessionalism." In this context the "Decade to Overcome Violence" was mentioned. A careful strategy is being developed to invite churches and ecumenical bodies in each region to join the DOV and become involved in concrete actions.

The numerous activities developed by the seven regional desks can be grouped into four programmatic directions identified during the planning process and reaffirmed by the Advisory Group: (1) Promotion of capacity-building to equip churches and ecumenical organizations in their diaconal work; (2) facilitation and co-ordination of national or regional platforms for analysis, dialogue and cooperation; (3) support of efforts by churches and church-related organizations to empower communities in their struggle for life and sustainable development, and (4) upholding regional perspectives in the WCC programs.

3.1.4 International Relations

The programs entrusted to this team emerge from situations of political crisis, conflicts and tension in the world which affect the life and witness of the churches.

The five major priorities are:

- Defending and promoting human rights and religious freedom: One of the highlights has been to facilitate and co-ordinate the

participation of a 35-member international ecumenical delegation at the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 2000, and a small consultation of church leaders from Muslim countries where Christians are in minority.

- Promoting the protection of the rights of uprooted people: In a global context where the problems of uprooted people are becoming more and more serious, both in terms of the number of people affected by conflicts and in terms of growing xenophobia and racism, the WCC's major efforts are focusing on advocacy at the international level, and on strengthening regional networks in Africa and in Europe.

- Promoting concerted ecumenical reflection and action on peace building and disarmament: Within the context of the DOV, a major focus during the last months has been to address the problem of increased violence in society and its relation to the proliferation of small arms. A first consultation on small arms was held in Rio de Janeiro in July 2000. Other regional consultations are planned for next year.

- Contributing to the peaceful resolution of conflicts: The wide range of activities reported under Public Issues indicates the priority given by the team to address issues related to conflict.

- Facilitating ecumenical presence at the United Nations: Mention was made of the Ecumenical Team led by the WCC and the Lutheran World Federation to promote the participation of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Social Development (Geneva 2000).

3.1.5 Discussion

In response to a question about the agenda that had been developed to nurture and support relationships with Orthodox seminaries and theological centers, it was reported that the specific focus had been on education.

The importance of the WCC's involvement in inter-religious dialogue and support of churches in regions where Christians are in a minority was emphasized.

It was suggested that when staff members plan travel they should, whenever possible, inform members of governing bodies in a given region about recent developments in the WCC.

The Report of the Cluster Director was referred to the Program Sub-Committee for consideration (see pp. 65-66 below).

3.2 Cluster on Issues and Themes

The Rev. Dr. Sam Kobia presented the report on the work of the Cluster. He pointed out that an integrated approach to the programmatic activities had been adopted. A life-centered ethic is emerging from several activities of the teams. This is expressed in the work on HIV/AIDS; in initiatives to deal with life-threatening consequences of globalized capitalism; in the search for global concerns, including caring for the earth as home for all creation; in land, identity and indigenous spirituality; and in inclusiveness, especially to enhance the quality of life of people with disabilities.

While each team has implemented its own program activities, inter-team cooperation has emerged as a distinct characteristic in the work of the post-Harare period. Inter-Cluster collaboration is also evident in the council-wide work, including the Decade to Overcome Violence, Advocacy, and Globalization.

Dr. Kobia emphasized the importance of partnership in the ecumenical fellowship. As an example, he mentioned the meeting between URM and its Northern partners.

Some of the issues of wider concern that will require further discussion by the staff are:

- ecumenical formation of church leaders against the background of a growing tendency towards strong denominational centeredness;
- mutuality in partnership;
- dialogue with Bretton Woods Institutions, WTO and specialized UN agencies. Some of them (WTO, IMF) have taken the initiative to contact the Council.
- Emerging forms of racism and xenophobia in Europe present a big challenge to the work of the WCC to combat racism in the twenty-first century.
- Ecumenism and post-modernism.

3.2.1 Faith and Order

The major event in the period was a joint consultation with the Mission and Evangelism team on "Ecclesiology and Mission." The conference was designed to test the concept of "mission" in the Faith and Order paper "The Nature and Purpose of the Church" and that of "church" in the documents and work of the Mission and

Evangelism team so as to provide a wide coherent understanding of these concepts.

Since the Executive Committee meeting in March 2000, preparatory meetings were held to plan the study processes on Theological Anthropology; Ethnic Identity; National Identity; the Search for Unity; and Worship.

3.2.2 Education and Ecumenical Formation

The Scholarships Working Group had discussed the final report of a professional evaluation of the Scholarships program over the past five years. Many of the findings affirmed some of the policy developments already in process, whereas others raised questions for further consideration.

The ETE Working Group had a major discussion on promoting ecumenical theological education against a background of an increased emphasis on denominational theological education in many countries.

Two major issues are being taken up by the team: (1) the ecumenical formation of denominational church leaders, and (2) the viability of church-related schools.

3.2.3 Mission and Evangelism

The new Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, which met in March/April 2000, unanimously agreed to propose to the Central Committee that the WCC organize a world mission conference before the next Assembly, i.e., in late 2003 or early 2004, to reflect on Christian mission as affirming life in fullness

within the context of globalization. It also adopted the text "Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today" as a study document of the Commission. It further emphasized the need to provide a consultant to help the Health Desk with its work on HIV/AIDS.

The team also organized a consultation on Faith, Health and Healing in cooperation with the Mission Academy of Hamburg, Germany. The aims of the meeting were to take stock of the present emphasis on faith and healing in missiology, intercultural dialogue and medicine, to listen to various individual and community experiences of healing in different cultures, and to identify urgent needs for future research and ecumenical dialogue or action.

3.2.4 Justice, Peace and Creation

The activities of the staff working on **Economic Justice** included

- advocacy through the work of the Ecumenical Team with the UN. One major activity was participation in and impact on "Geneva 2000" through a panel discussion at the Forum and participation in UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Social Development), which met in Geneva in June 2000 to review progress since the 1985 Copenhagen Summit on Social Development;
- monitoring of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monitory Fund (IMF), which involved participation in a seminar organized by the WB on the economic situation after the financial crisis in Asia, and another on the possible cooperation of the WB with NGOs;
- a meeting of the Guidelines Group on how churches can appropriately respond to policies of the WB and IMF.

Dr. Kobia then reported on his participation in the NGO forum during the Annual Meeting of the WB and the IMF, and in the dialogue meeting between representatives of the civil society and the international financial institutions, both held in Prague in September 2000.

The JPC team convened the first meeting of the Decade to Overcome Violence (**DOV**) reference group in May 2000. Preparations for the launch of the Decade in Berlin and subsequent launches in the regions are being made with the cooperation of the teams on Regional Relations and Ecumenical Sharing and on Church and Ecumenical Relations. Promotional materials have been prepared. Strong emphasis has been put on communication strategy. The major concerns center around the need to approach the churches with humility and respect, emphasizing the importance of the ownership of the Decade by the churches. An effective communication strategy for the DOV process could raise the visibility of the WCC in regions where it is otherwise rather low.

A conference on **Climate Change** was held in May in Saskatoon, Canada. The meeting produced a document on "The Atmosphere as a Global Commons," addressing the ethical dimensions of the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change on CO2 emissions. This conference was complemented by a consultation on "The Earth is Our Home: A Religious Response to Climate Change in Asia," held in July 2000 in Bangalore, India.

As **Racism and Xenophobia** are growing, there is an urgent need to identify what the churches can do to help stop the activities of racist groups and anarchists.

A workshop on **Indigenous Peoples' Identity** was organized in cooperation with the Latin America Council of Churches (CLAI) and two regional organizations of Indigenous Peoples, THOA, and CONAMAQ. It identified as the key issues: land and ancestral domain; the arts and the misappropriation of indigenous arts and crafts; history, including the documentation of local histories and a review of the historical process; language; theology and indigenous spirituality; and the need to analyze social movements in relation to the struggles of Indigenous Peoples.

The JPC team facilitated the attendance of twenty-one delegates to the 18th Session of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva, in July 2000. The meeting was attended by 200 representatives. In connection with the UN meeting, the JPC team organized an Indigenous Peoples Preparatory Meeting.

Under the theme of "Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Land and Identity" participants discussed the deterioration of the global economic and political situation in the Pacific as a result of the globalization process. It is expected that Indigenous Peoples will face further marginalization and graver threats to the continuity of their cultures and traditional way of life. The meeting provided space for representatives of indigenous peoples and churches of the Pacific to continue to explore new alternatives for a sustainable life among all peoples in the region. It was organized in cooperation with the WCC Pacific Desk and the Pacific Council of Churches in Fiji in September 2000

The **Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network** (EDAN) was formed during the WCC Assembly in Harare. It continues the work on disabilities which had been on the agenda of the WCC for the past fifteen years. A recent meeting of the Reference Group of

EDAN decided to concentrate attention on two areas of concern in collaboration with the EEF team: to challenge theological schools on curriculum and pastoral preparation of clergy, and to bring the concern of people with disabilities into Christian education, Sunday School materials and into the work of Lay Training centers.

A second focus will be to work with the Faith and Order Commission to move the churches towards the adoption of a second interim theological and ecclesiological statement as a framework for the advocacy and pastoral role the churches need to play in the present changing environment.

3.2.5 Discussion

It was felt that one of the most important programs of the WCC is the DOV. It was affirmed that the ownership of DOV must be with the churches.

With regard to the work of Faith and Order, it was mentioned that the Commission should be encouraged to look at ecclesiological realities in a different way.

The Report of the Cluster Director was referred to the Program Sub-Committee for discussion (see pp. 66-67 below).

3.3 Cluster on Communication

Ms. Kristine Greenaway highlighted some paragraphs of her written report.

She pointed out that the sudden death of Marlin VanElderen, Executive Editor for WCC Publications, deeply affected the Communication Cluster and its work. A new role description for his position will be presented for approval to the Central Committee in Berlin, and it is hoped to have a successor by the middle of 2001.

Apart from ongoing work on the Ecumenical Review, WCC News, fliers, etc. seven books have been published under the WCC Publications label and six more will be published before the end of this year, including an up-dated edition of "Growth in Agreement." The Publications Board has met several times to approve new publications and continues to review progress on rationalizing production of periodicals. Sales revenue has been higher than budgeted.

A new publications management system has been purchased to streamline sales and distribution procedures and integrate product data, client data and invoicing.

The Communication Advisory Group has approved setting up a task group with regard to the Library and the Archives to focus on support for additional funding and development of the Archives.

The DOV Reference Group approved a communication strategy, and a communicator has been appointed. Ms. Greenaway reported that the worship service during the Central Committee meeting, which will mark the launch of DOV, will be televised.

The Media Relations Office continues to send to the media network Press Releases, Updates, Features and Press Infos. Among other activities, it organized an exposure visit for journalists to Kosovo,

Montenegro and Macedonia with a specific emphasis on how the churches and religious communities strive for peace and reconciliation. It was also involved in the Peace to the City Dance Production at the World Exhibition in Hanover, Germany and in planning the communication strategy for the Advocacy Alliance.

One of the concerns of Communication is to broaden the dialogue of the WCC to reach appropriate audiences and to nurture relationships with member churches. Strategies have to be developed to communicate effectively with institutions such as Bretton Woods Institutions, IMF, WB, WTO, etc. and to engage the media who shape public opinion.

Guest editors from Cameroon and Argentina were invited for the production of two issues of the WCC News. The next edition will be edited by a journalist from the Philippines. A resident journalist from Mozambique has accepted an invitation to work as African "resident journalist" in Geneva for three months. He will write articles about the WCC for the African news market. Communication plans for Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe are in discussion and at different phases of development.

It was also mentioned that the work of ENI is being reviewed, and it is proposed that ENI become a non-profit making association under Swiss law.

Discussion

It was pointed out that a Communication strategy regarding the Special Commission should be developed. What are we expecting of the Special Commission?

There is a need to help WCC member churches communicate with each other. Communication should aim to build the ecumenical community.

Members of WCC governing bodies should be encouraged to be agents of communication in their regions.

4. PRELIMINARY FINANCE REPORT

The Moderator of the Finance Committee, Bishop Wolfgang Huber, gave a brief overview of the financial situation of the Council.

1999 Results: Referring to the Report of the Finance Sub-Committee to the Executive Committee in March 2000 (see Minutes pp. 46ff.), he reported that the final accounts for 1999 have been audited and will be sent to the member churches. The operating surplus, due to the exceptional investment results, in the amount of CHF 748.000 in excess of CHF 900.000 as foreseen in March, will go to the reserves. The CHF 900.000 has been used according to the decision of the Executive Committee in March 2000 (see Minutes, pp. 47-48).

2000 Deficit: The Executive Committee decided in March 2000 that the deficit for the year 2000 should not exceed CHF 50.000. However, the forecast deficit is now CHF 778.000. There has been a decrease in Undesignated Income and in Investment Revenue. There are higher than anticipated expenditures in professional fees, non-staff travel and hospitality. Publication costs are lower than budgeted, because some publications have been postponed to the year 2001.

Initiatives: The round table discussions, the regional meetings for Europe, and the appointment of a new IMD director in the US will no doubt have long-term results.

UDI Income Strategy: The 10 million campaign has not yet shown the desired results. The tendency to increase the percentage of fixed costs over variable costs endangers programs and projects. Guidelines are needed to deal with the anticipated structural deficit over the next two to three years.

Central Committee, Berlin: In addition to their regular membership contribution, the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) has decided to give DM 500.000 towards the expenses of the Central Committee in Berlin. It was noted with regret that more than two thirds of those who have received the May 26 letter of the General Secretary regarding subsidies of costs of attending Central Committee meetings had not even replied to the letter.

Pension Fund: Bishop Huber reported that the Pension Fund continues to be the most stable element in the financial situation of the WCC. It is at the moment administered according to international accounting standards. Because of a revision of the Accounting Regulations which would have entailed recording a significant liability of the Council towards the Pension Fund, the issue needs to be dealt with in the context of the wider economic situation and the future of the Council.

Ethical Investments: The WCC has three types of investment funds: Pension Fund, Endowment Fund, and General Fund. The Pension Fund is under the guidance of a pension board, which is continuing to discuss how to apply ethical guidelines for its investments. The Endowment Fund is invested with Pictet & Co., a

bank which has no formal system to monitor investments according to ethical criteria. However the portfolio manager is very sensitive to this issue and aware of the WCC investment guidelines, which are followed to the best of his interpretation. The General Fund is invested with Lombard Odier, a bank which is felt to follow all the WCC criteria, including finding companies with good employment practices, policies to protect the environment, and an emphasis on human rights.

Discussion: The Moderator asked Bishop Huber to transmit to the EKD the gratitude of the Executive Committee for the generous gift of DM 500.000 towards the expenses of the Central Committee meeting in Berlin.

The Director of Finance, Robert Christeler, informed the Executive Committee that the anticipated deficit for the year 2000 will be covered by the general reserves. He also pointed out that the dollar assets of the WCC are sufficient to cover the dollar liabilities. The Council was encouraged to build into the budget for designated income amounts for administration of programs/projects.

The General Secretary pointed out that there is a need to increase the percentage of WCC contributions to the Pension Fund in 2000. A decision has also to be taken before the end of 2000 whether to adopt the Swiss accounting system for the Pension Fund.

The imbalance between designated and undesignated funds needs to be addressed, and ways be found to use designated contributions to support the work of the WCC in general.

The preliminary finance report was then referred to the Finance Sub-Committee for discussion and action (see Report of the Sub-Committee, pp. 69-75 below).

5. MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

5.1 A Discussion Paper

Mr. Hubert Van Beek presented a first draft of a discussion paper on the issue of membership, which was drafted in response to the request of the Executive Committee at its previous meeting (see Appendix III, pp. 95-103).

5.2 Discussion

In the discussion it was pointed out that the whole question of membership should be linked with the reflections of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC. New models need to be investigated, i.e., representation by regions or confessions.

It was suggested that the discussion paper should be shared with the Special Commission for consideration in relation to its reflection on the issue of membership. A sub-group of the Executive or Central Committee could be asked to coordinate such a study.

It was felt that the membership question is one of the most important issues. The theological and ecclesiological aspect of the issue was underlined.

The paper was referred to the Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations for discussion.

5.3 Recommendations re Membership

Taking into account the comments made in the discussion by the Executive Committee, the Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed that

- *the paper on Membership and the comments made in the discussion be shared with the Special Commission at its forthcoming meeting, for consideration in relation to the Special Commission's reflection on the issue of membership;*

- *the Executive Committee at its next meeting set up a special group to study the issue of membership and to propose actions for implementation by the Central Committee; this group should work in close connection with the Special Commission and other commissions and advisory groups;*

- *the staff be asked to bring a proposal for the composition and the mandate of the group to the next meeting of the Executive Committee;*

- *the Special Commission be informed of the decision to set up the group and be invited to share its comments and suggestions with the Executive Committee.*

5.4 Applications from Churches

The Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed to bring the following recommendations to the Central Committee at its forthcoming meeting:

- *to receive the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia and the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches into full membership;*

- *to receive the Ekalesia Niue into full membership, with reference to the provision made in Rule 1.4a regarding exception to the criterion of size;*

- *to receive into full membership the newly formed United Reformed Church in replacement of the membership of the former United Reformed Church in the UK and the former Congregational Union of Scotland;*

- *to receive into full membership the newly formed Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa in replacement of the membership of the former Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and the former Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.*

5.5 Applications from Councils of Churches and Ecumenical Organizations

The Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed to bring the following recommendations to the Central Committee at its forthcoming meeting:

- *to receive the French Protestant Federation and the National Council of Churches of Burundi as associate councils with the World Council of Churches;*

- *to recognize the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe and the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe as International Ecumenical Organizations in working relationships with the World Council of Churches.*

6. SPECIAL COMMISSION ON ORTHODOX PARTICIPATION IN THE WCC

Mr. Lemopoulos introduced a staff paper entitled "Towards the Second Plenary of the Special Commission."

6.1 Introduction

The four sub-committees have met as originally planned. All meetings were well attended. During all sub-committee meetings there was the commonly shared impression that participants were committed to the process, bringing their churches' concerns and working towards creative solutions.

There is probably nothing radically new in the four sub-committee reports. They put together various elements and present a number of fundamental issues as shared concerns.

The work of the Special Commission will continue under the pressure of high expectations from the whole process. Some member churches have openly and officially declared the

importance they assign to the process, and the reports so far submitted seem to be raising similar expectations among the members of the Commission. The Special Commission should be prepared to identify what expectations can be legitimately fulfilled by the WCC and what cannot be fulfilled because of constitutional constraints.

Almost all reports include a strong plea that the Council explore the potential of a decision-making model based on consensus but different from the existing one. Most recommendations from the sub-committees emphasize the need to record non-agreement and differences regarding ecumenical issues. Furthermore, the reports reflect on the way the Council's agenda is prepared and the relations between decision-making bodies and staff. They also raise questions about existing models of ecumenical structures and explore new models.

The suggestions and recommendations of the sub-committees will be considered by the plenary of the Special Commission, and an interim report will be submitted to the Central Committee in Berlin in January 2001.

Sub-Committee I discussed the issue of membership, concentrating its attention on the structural perspective and on membership criteria. Other sub-committees dealt with the issues of ecclesiology, conciliar fellowship, church groupings and denominationalism. Sub-committees also discussed the issues of baptismal unity and the Council's trinitarian basis, and the understanding of the church and its unity.

Three basic questions will probably have to be studied by the plenary of the Special Commission and then be referred to the

Central Committee for response: (1) How can the work done by the WCC with regard to these issues be taken seriously into consideration? (2) To what extent can the real possibilities offered by a multilateral setting be acknowledged and exploited? (3) What can be done so that these theological and ecclesiological matters are responsibly treated within the limited period of the mandate of the Special Commission?

The most pertinent questions to be discussed by the plenary of the Special Commission will concern methodology. What should the WCC do in order to contribute constructively to the process of the Special Commission, and what should the churches themselves do? How far should the Special Commission accept "clear definitions" in the area of theology and ecclesiology, without any possible ambiguity? To what extent will the Special Commission be ready to take into consideration materials elaborated in other circles (e.g. WCC Central Committee on "membership", WCC-LWF dialogue on simultaneous membership and forms of representation; discussion regarding the Forum related to new forms of representation, etc.)? Can the plenary focus on "process management" on the one hand, clarifying the expectations from the sub-committees and the character of recommendations to the Central Committee, and on the other hand elaborate internal mechanism for reaching agreement/consensus within the Commission itself?

6.2 Discussion

In the discussion it was emphasized that the churches themselves are the actors. To give only one example, the Orthodox churches

have to deal with the issue of common worship and the Protestant churches will have to be concerned with denominationalism.

As the first report of the Special Commission will be presented to the Central Committee, it is hoped that the Special Commission will raise specific concerns by defining convergences and divergences and by identifying directions which may need to be followed.

The report was referred to the Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations and to the Program Sub-Committee for further discussion.

6.3 Recommendations by the Sub-Committees

The Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations had some exchange on the methodology of dealing with the ecclesiological and theological issues underlying much of the work of the Special Commission and **recommended:**

that the Executive Committee encourage the Special Commission to assess itself what it could achieve within the time-frame given to it, and how best it could bring its mandate to a preliminary conclusion in 2002.

The Program Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation for the information received on the work so far accomplished by the sub-committees of the Special Commission, for the report prepared by staff, and the insights shared by members of the Special Commission. It **recommended** the following action and the Executive Committee agreed:

- *to note with satisfaction that four sub-committees have met and submitted their reports to the Special Commission for further consideration;*

- *to express its appreciation to all those who made these meetings possible and contributed towards the completion of their tasks;*

- *to ask its members that are also members of the Special Commission to convey to the plenary the message that it takes seriously the input received so far and looks forward to the interim report to be presented to the Central Committee;*

- *on the ground of the input received so far and realizing the immensity of the task, to urge the Special Commission to assess the time-frame of its mandate and consider seriously the question of methodology.*

7. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

In the absence of Ms. Jeanne Becher, Dr. Raiser highlighted several developments in the preparations of the next meeting of the Central Committee.

7.1 Venue

The meetings of the Program Committee (25-27 January 2001), the Executive Committee (26-27 January) and the Finance Committee (27 January) will take place in Berlin, at the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Haus, a hotel and conference center of the Evangelical Church of the Union. Participants will be housed there and in nearby hotels.

The meetings of the Central Committee (January 28-February 6, 2001) will be held in Potsdam, about 30 km from Berlin. All participants will be accommodated in the Hotel Sanssouci, which also has adequate conference facilities within the same building.

Staff members are working closely with the preparatory committee in Germany to handle the logistical matters related to the meeting.

7.2 Agenda

The opening worship service will take place prior to the official opening of the Central Committee, on Sunday evening 28 January at the St. Nikolai-Kirche in Potsdam.

The local committee is arranging for some **encounters with government officials**. On 27 January, members of the Executive Committee will be received by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Manfred Stolpe, Prime Minister of Brandenburg will address the members of the Central Committee following the opening worship on 28 January. The Federal President, Johannes Rau, will address the Central Committee on Wednesday, 31 January. This will be followed by a festive dinner. Eberhard Diepgen, Lord Mayor of Berlin, will receive members of the Central Committee on Monday, 29 January.

There will be several opportunities for representatives from Berlin churches to hear about the work of the WCC. The agenda includes, in addition to the Padare, two evening encounters with congregations or groups in Berlin. The launch of the Decade to Overcome Violence will be a major event to which the public is invited.

7.3 Plenaries

The program will include plenary presentations on Economy, on Europe and on the Decade to Overcome Violence.

7.4 Padare

Padare Offerings on the following issues are planned: Decade to Overcome Violence, Globalization, Europe. Orthodox Relations, Relations with Pentecostals, Communication, Mission, Prophetic Diakonia-Advocacy, Inter-Faith Dialogue, Ecumenical Formation. It is foreseen that the Padares will strengthen the overall program and stimulate discussion among Central Committee members.

7.5 Discussion

It was pointed out that in Germany there is a growing interest for the work of the World Council of Churches.

Dr. Raiser reported that meetings between senior staff members of the WCC and of the German Embassy are taking place to prepare the agenda for the encounter of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and members of the WCC Executive Committee. It is hoped that through this encounter Chancellor Schröder will better understand the role of the churches in Europe.

Bishop Huber asked whether the Opening Worship on Sunday, 28 January could begin at 6.00 p.m. instead of 7.00 p.m.. This would allow Manfred Kok, President of the EKD, to address the audience.

In response to the question whether there will be a local Catholic presence at the Central Committee meeting it was answered that the local Catholic Bishop has been invited for the opening worship and for the opening session.

One Executive Committee member expressed some concern about the timing of the Worship on Sunday, 4 February, because such timing might make it difficult for participants to attend worship services in their own denomination.

It was pointed out that the issue of the Mission of the Church in a secular multicultural and multi-faith surrounding is missing in the Padare offerings.

The report was referred to the Program Sub-Committee for further discussion and recommendations (see below pp. 67-68).

8. RELATIONS WITH CONSTITUENCIES

8.1 Introduction

Mr. Van Beek introduced a paper on "Relations with Constituencies" which gives an account of official visits and contacts with the constituencies and partners since the Executive Committee meeting in March 2000.

He highlighted some events, e.g.

- the team visit to Zimbabwe to express solidarity with the churches and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches in the present

difficult economic and political situation and to discuss plans for monitoring elections;

- the visit of the President of the Protestant Federation of Haiti, Rev. Seth Pierre Louis, to the WCC to strengthen cooperation following Dr. Raiser's visit to Haiti;

- the visit of Alexander Belopopsky and Dr. Peter Bouteneff to the Orthodox Church in Georgia.

- A two-day ecumenical meeting of churches and councils in the Baltics took place in Tallinn, Estonia, organized jointly by the WCC, the LWF and CEC. Representatives of churches and councils in the Great Lakes Region (Africa) met in Uganda to discuss concerted action aiming at peace and reconciliation in the region.

- The newly formed Joint Consultative Group with Pentecostals met for the first time in June 2000 in Hautecombe, France. It formulated an understanding of its task, identified broad issues to be dealt with during the time of its mandate, discussed methodologies and began to plan for the next few years. The group will meet again in June 2001 in Quito, Ecuador.

- For the first time, the African members of the Central Committee and the members of the General Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches came together in March 2000.

Mr. Van Beek reported that an action of the LWF Council brought up again the question of future assemblies of global ecumenical bodies, especially the CWCs and the WCC. Three major events

will take place at intervals of one year: LWF Assembly 2003, WARC General Council 2004 and WCC Assembly 2005. In order to ensure coordination, the LWF Council and the WARC Executive Committee have decided to invite each other and the WCC to be represented on their preparatory committees.

8.2 Discussion

Regret was expressed that three Assemblies are being held on different themes at intervals of one year. One proposal was that the themes of the LWF and WARC Assemblies might contribute towards preparation of the WCC Assembly.

The visits of senior staff of member churches and agencies to the WCC were appreciated.

The Moderator suggested that in future the report on Relations with Constituencies could highlight trends in the life of the churches and in the regions.

The paper was referred to the Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations for further discussion.

8.3 Recommendations by the Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation for the reporting on relations with constituencies. It **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed:

- *when and where applicable, to further enrich the reporting by pointing to possible trends or developments in relationships;*

- *to indicate more specifically items which the Executive Committee might want to refer to the Policy Reference Committee I of the Central Committee.*

9. JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP BETWEEN THE WCC AND PENTECOSTALS

9.1 Introduction

Mr. Van Beek reported on the first meeting of the new Joint Consultative Group between the WCC and Pentecostals in June at the Abbey of Hautecombe, France. The meeting was attended by 20 members of the Group, 10 appointed by the Central Committee and 10 Pentecostals from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America.

The statement of purpose is:

- to search for better ways of understanding one another;
- to look for new opportunities for mutual learning and action;
- to share our experience of Christian witness with one another;
- to discuss our challenges with the hope of moving beyond them;
- to share what we will learn with our respective churches.

The group identified a number of issues as possible topics for future meetings: theological questions, experience of the Spirit, gospel and culture, mission and evangelism, social commitment.

Several suggestions were made regarding ways in which the group could do its work. Besides the academic method of preparing and reading papers for discussion, other forms of dealing with issues were proposed such as narrative, oral theology in a setting of prayer and celebration, workshops, small groups, etc.

The group will meet again in June 2001 in Quito, Ecuador. The main topic will be the question of "perception."

The paper was referred to the Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations for further discussion and recommendations.

9.2 Discussion and Recommendations by the Sub-Committee

In discussing the report on the first meeting of the Joint Consultative Group with Pentecostals the Sub-Committee highlighted the importance of the participation of the Pentecostal member churches of the Council in this process, and of ways to communicate to the member churches the information on the growing dialogue between the WCC and Pentecostals. In this respect the issue of involving the "evangelical" and "charismatic" sectors in the member churches was also brought up. The Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed

- *to affirm the statement of purpose as formulated by the Joint Consultative Group at its first meeting;*

- *to ask the staff to keep the Executive Committee informed about future developments regarding the agenda of the Joint Consultative Group.*

10. FORUM OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

10.1 Introduction

Mr. Van Beek introduced the subject, recalling that a consultation with representatives of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and organizations had been held in Pasadena, USA, 9-11 September 2000 to explore the Forum proposal.

More than twenty representatives from Pentecostal and Evangelical churches as well as Christian networks and para-church organizations participated in the meeting together with the members of the Continuation Committee. The World Evangelical Fellowship as well as three regional and two national member bodies of the WEF were represented.

The participants responded positively to the proposal of what they called a "Global Christian Forum" and suggested that the purpose of a future Forum should be:

- to deepen our commitment to God's mission in the world;
- to enhance our understanding of contemporary expressions of Christian mission;
- to pursue principles and practices that would enable us to handle our Christian differences and distinctives creatively and peaceably;
- to engage in theological reflection in areas of common concern;
- to strengthen the wholeness of the church by encouraging communication and cooperation; and
- to foster relationships that may lead to common witness.

The meeting was marked by an atmosphere of mutual partnership, trust and consensus building.

The Continuation Committee will meet again in December 2000 to consider next steps in the process. It will share its proposals with the Executive/Central Committee in January/February 2001.

10.2 Discussion

In the discussion it was pointed out that the term "Evangelical" creates many difficulties.

The question was raised whether a possible Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organizations would replace the WCC or be parallel to it.

It was noted that the vision of unity was missing in the purpose as proposed by the consultation. For Evangelicals and Pentecostals the main issue is mission.

Mr. Van Beek pointed out that this was a report from a consultation. After the meeting in December 2000, a report of the Continuation Committee will be shared with the Executive and Central Committee.

The paper was then referred to the Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations.

10.3 Recommendations by the Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee reviewed the comments made and questions raised in the discussion of the Executive Committee on the report of the recent consultation at Fuller Theological Seminary. It **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed to

- *affirm the efforts made by the Continuation Committee to involve Evangelical and Pentecostal constituencies in the consultative process on the Forum proposal;*

- *affirm that the process towards a future Forum is not meant to replace the WCC with another ecumenical structure or to multiply global ecumenical structures;*

- *encourage the Continuation Committee to review the Forum proposal in light of the consultative process so far and to consider next steps to be taken;*

- *ask staff to report at the next meeting of the Executive Committee on the work of the Continuation Committee.*

11. RECENT MOVES INTO AND TOWARD CHURCH UNION

Mr. Van Beek introduced a paper on "Recent Moves Into – and Toward – Church Union." The paper was then referred to the Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations.

The Sub-Committee proposed and the Executive Committee agreed to acknowledge the recent moves into church union in South Africa

and the United Kingdom, and expressed its appreciation for the formation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and the United Reformed Church.

12. REPORT FROM THE LWF-WCC STAFF WORKING GROUP

Mr. Lemopoulos highlighted some of the issues in the Report from the LWF-WCC Staff Working Group to the General Secretaries of the LWF and the WCC.

12.1 Introduction

While relations between the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches have always been close, their working relations have varied through the years. The WCC in principle considers all Christian World Communions (CWCs) equally as partners in the ecumenical movement. Specific expectations for closer and increased cooperation with the LWF arise from the fact that it shares the same facilities, carries out similar programmatic work in many areas and is to a great extent supported by the same member churches and funding partners as the WCC, as well as being financially and administratively the strongest Christian World Communion.

Earlier explorations of closer cooperation were usually initiated by the leadership of the two organizations. However, since the LWF Assembly in Hong Kong (1997) and the WCC Assembly in Harare (1998), member churches have, through their governing bodies, requested closer cooperation. Following recommendations by the LWF Council and the WCC Central Committee in 1999, the two

general secretaries appointed an LWF-WCC staff working group to assess relevant issues in the area of relationships between the two organizations and their contribution to the ecumenical movement as a whole.

The staff group **recommended** that the general secretaries appoint a permanent LWF-WCC staff working group to

- *follow up matters arising at the regular meetings of the general secretaries;*

- *continue reflection on issues dealt with in this report;*

- *consider ways to encourage programmatic relationships between the two organizations and identifying new areas of cooperation.*

12.2 The WCC and the LWF

The constitutions of the WCC and of the LWF make it clear that the two organizations share the common purpose of serving Christian unity throughout the world. In pursuing this goal they have two distinctive roles and work from different bases. The WCC is a fellowship of churches which have come together because of the division of the church and seek to overcome this division through common reflection and action.

The LWF's doctrinal basis implies its self-understanding as a communion of churches in explicit altar and pulpit fellowship, and therefore implies an accountability of the churches to each other which is served through the LWF.

The staff group **recommended**

- *that in developing their work and relationships, both the LWF and the WCC should consider acting together in all matters except those in which the differing roles of the two organizations require separate action;*

- *an exploration with other CWCs and with Regional Ecumenical Organizations (REOs) of the understanding of the nature of the church and its unity in time and space.*

12.3 Membership in the two Organizations

Of the member churches of the LWF, 53.1% (68 of 128) belong to the WCC. These 68 Lutheran churches make up 19.2 percent of the total WCC membership. All Lutheran member churches of the WCC also belong to the LWF.

Both the LWF and the WCC seek to bring the churches to greater unity and enable them to respond to their common calling; yet they fulfill different functions within the ecumenical movement.

The issue of membership has taken on renewed importance within the WCC. The principle of admitting individual, autonomous churches into membership is increasingly perceived as contradicting the very purpose of the WCC. To the extent that new member churches or applicants see WCC membership as "legitimating" their existence as an independent church or denomination, the WCC can be perceived as promoting fragmentation rather than unity.

A first step towards meeting these concerns could be taken by inviting churches of the same denomination or confession in a given country or region to hold membership collectively. The United Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UELC) in India and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) are illustrations of existing types of joint or collective membership.

Churches which are members of both the WCC and the LWF are expected to support both of them financially. To this end the WCC and the LWF conduct separate negotiations with the same churches.

The WCC seeks the advice of the appropriate world confessional body before admitting a church into membership. This raises a difficulty for the LWF, because of its established policy of respecting the autonomous decision-making authority of its member churches.

In implementing the recommendation of the Harare Assembly "to facilitate and strengthen the relationships between the WCC and CWCs," the representation of the LWF and other CWCs in the governing structures of the WCC could be reinforced.

The staff group **recommended** that the issues identified in this report be addressed through the following steps:

- *clarification of the understanding of what it means to be a member church of bodies such as the LWF and the WCC;*

- *further exploration of the potential of a new dynamic of simultaneous membership;*

- *exploration of innovative ways to deal with questions of representations;*

- *exploration of innovative ways to deal with the questions of membership fees and financial contributions.*

12.4 Coordination of Assemblies

Reflection on closer cooperation between the WCC and the LWF raised the possibility of holding joint or coordinated assemblies, and the governing bodies of both the LWF and the WCC adopted resolutions in 1999 calling for further discussion of the role of ecumenical assemblies.

A resolution by the WARC General Council in Debrecen in 1997 drew attention to the possibility of considering together the assemblies of the LWF, WARC and WCC. While the suggestion of coordinating these particular assemblies is logical because they have many of the same characteristics and more or less the same frequency, it is very important that a model of cooperation on ecumenical assemblies not envisage a "bloc" of certain organizations. The possibility of developing specific forms of coordination with church families whose assemblies are different in character and frequency should also be explored.

Moreover, it would be important to see how REOs might participate in a model of cooperation.

The advantages of bringing assemblies into closer contact with each other could include the following:

- reinforcing the *common elements* in the *ecumenical vision* and its application;
- *reducing costs;*
- encouraging *new approaches* to assembly processes;
- questioning certain styles of ecumenical work and *encouraging new ways.*

There are two general means of bringing assemblies in closer contact with each other: holding them jointly or coordinating them.

To affirm the clear commitment of the LWF and the WCC to maximum cooperation on assemblies and their shared vision for holding common assemblies, the staff group **recommended** as first and yet important steps that

- *the general secretary of the LWF explore the possible value of holding a joint LWF/WARC Assembly;*

- *the general secretary of the WCC explore the possible value of a deliberative session on joint/coordinated assemblies during the Central Committee meeting in January 2001;*

- *the two organizations consider carefully a coordinated schedule for assembly preparations (taking into consideration the dates of meetings of their governing bodies, their respective decision-making processes, formation of committees for preparing assembly-related work, possibilities of having observers/consultants in another's assembly preparations, etc.).*

12.5 Areas and Patterns of Cooperation

Earlier explorations of increased cooperation between the WCC and the LWF have shown that each round of discussions resulted in closer cooperation in certain specific areas.

Relationships or cooperation of a permanent or regular character are at the leadership and governance level, at the level of management and administration, in the area of communication, in the area of ecumenical relations, joint participation in the Worship Committee of the Ecumenical Center, and co-organization of visits to the Ecumenical Center.

There is also cooperation on specific programmatic areas, e.g. in human rights, in some crisis situations, on peace and reconciliation, in the area of church and ecumenical relations, in the area of women's programs, and in the area of social development.

There are many other areas of potential cooperation, and the concern for identifying these should be a permanent task for the two organizations.

To highlight the double concern of continuing ongoing collaboration and identifying new areas for cooperation, the staff group **recommended**:

- *that the impact and implications (for financial and human resources) of the various types of cooperation identified in the inventory be evaluated and assessed;*

- *that possibilities of closer cooperation be considered in the area of strategic objectives of institutional development (human resources, management, information technology).*

The report was referred to the Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations for further consideration.

12.6 Recommendations by the Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee directed its attention particularly to the recommendations (see above pp. 43 and 48-49), and to the proposals for representation on assembly planning committees made by the LWF Council and the WARC Executive Committee (see above page 36). With regard to the situation of three consecutive Assemblies in 2003 (LWF), 2004 (WARC) and 2005 (WCC), the sub-committee underlined the desirability, but also the difficulty of coordinating the themes of these assemblies. It felt that the efforts to avoid a similar situation in the future should be continued. In light of this discussion, and with reference to other major issues of coordination and cooperation highlighted in the staff report, the Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed to:

- *urge the formation of a permanent LWF-WARC-WCC Staff Working Group;*

- *propose the following elements for the mandate of this Group:*
  - *to consider possibilities of closer cooperation in the area of strategic objectives of institutional development (human resources, management, information technology);*

- *to encourage programmatic cooperation between the organizations and identify new areas of such cooperation;*
- *to explore further the possibilities of coordinating assemblies and of moving towards the holding of common assemblies.*

12.7 Discussion

Hesitation was expressed by some Orthodox members regarding the last recommendation "to consider possibilities of closer cooperation ..." with the Lutheran and Reformed families as this might leave other church families out of the picture and even influence negatively the work of the Special Commission.

In response it was pointed out that the concern has already been recorded and that the WCC would not be unduly influenced by the LWF and WARC, as this would create difficulties going far beyond the range of the Special Commission.

One of the concerns was membership. WCC/LWF discussions constitute a clear example of the need to reflect on the question with various members of the ecumenical family.

13. PUBLIC ISSUES

Rev. Dwain Epps presented a background note on public issues, listing actions taken since the last meeting of the Executive Committee in March 2000 and programmatic initiatives related to international affairs. A "Statement on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Creation of the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees" and a background paper on the Status of Jerusalem had also been submitted for review and action.

Mr. Epps drew specific attention to the extensive efforts between the Cluster on Communication, particularly the Public Information team, and the International Relations team. All the statements have been put on the WCC Website.

13.1 Election and Peace Monitoring

An ecumenical team was sent to **Zimbabwe** to listen to and offer support to the churches, and to see how best to respond to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches' request for ecumenical monitors for elections which were finally scheduled for June 2000.

Other requests for the deployment of ecumenical observers in election monitoring have come from **Tanzania, Ghana** and **Gambia**.

13.2 Involvement in UN World Conferences

The WCC teams on Justice, Peace and Creation and on International Relations collaborated closely with the Lutheran World Federation in follow-up work of the Copenhagen Social Summit in 1995. An ecumenical team was formed to follow planning in the **Commission for Social Development** and the Preparatory Committee meetings for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Social Development. The Special Session, known as "**Geneva 2000,**" was held in June.

During the preparatory meetings and the Special Session itself, the "Ecumenical Team" became a "key player" for NGO and civil society efforts. Representatives of the churches called for a change of heart among those now dominating the world economy so that it can become a just and moral economy where resources are equitably shared, and where public and private institutions are held accountable for the social and ecological consequences of their operations.

The WCC General Secretary gave particular voice to civil society concerns when he addressed an open letter to the UN Secretary-General expressing dismay at his issuance of the publication, "A Better World for All." That letter was given attention in the international press, and the dialogue which ensued with Secretary-General Annan, who issued a public reply, was widely followed.

The UN **World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance** (WCAR) will be held from 31 August to 7 September 2001 in South Africa. It is to review progress in the fight against racism and racial discrimination and formulate concrete recommendations.

In view of its long-term involvement in combating racism and complementary to the ongoing Ecumenical Study Process on Racism, the WCC is taking an active part in the preparatory process leading to the WCAR.

In the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence and long-standing WCC commitment to arms control and disarmament, preparations are underway for ecumenical involvement in the June 2001 UN Conference on **"Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.**"

In collaboration with CLAI and Viva Rio, a partner in the "Peace to the City" campaign, the WCC held the first of a series of planned regional and ecumenical consultations on small arms in Rio de Janeiro in late July 2000.

13.3 Humanitarian Intervention

A **Consultation on Religious Intolerance** with church leaders from Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria, Sudan, Ghana and Sierra Leone met in July to discuss the situation of Christians living in pluralistic contexts as minorities and/or in situations marked by religious tensions and conflicts.

In the **discussion** the question was raised whether the WCC would also deal with the situation of Christians living in countries with a Hindu majority. Mr. Epps replied that Indian churches had indicated that they wanted to deal with the problem without international interference. The choice to deal with churches in Islamic countries was strongly influenced by appeals from them that the WCC address the violence occurring in these countries.

13.4 Membership of an Ad hoc Public Issues Committee

The following names were proposed and accepted by the Executive Committee:

Very Rev. Dr. Georges Tsetsis, Moderator
Ms. Donnalie E.C. Edwards-Cabey
Ms. Carmencita Karagdag

Rev. Dr. Maake Jonathan Masango
Archbishop Nifon of Targoviste

Dr. Tsetsis presented on behalf of the Committee revised texts of the proposed actions and the Executive Committee adopted the following:

13.5 Statement on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Creation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

On 14 December 2000, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will commemorate its 50th anniversary. The UNHCR was created as a temporary instrument to respond to the needs of Europeans displaced as a result of World War II. Since then its mandate has not only been renewed every few years, but the scope of its work has expanded enormously. Today it is the primary instrument of the United Nations working with more than 22 million refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, and internally displaced people in 152 countries in all regions of the world.

The churches too have a long history of responding to the needs of uprooted people. Even before the formation of the World Council of Churches, churches were working together to meet the needs of those forced by war and economic circumstances to flee their homes. Working closely with UNHCR since it was created, the churches have provided assistance to uprooted people, facilitated their local integration, repatriation, and resettlement, and have advocated for their protection and for the respect of their human rights. In 1995, the World Council of Churches Central Committee

issued a statement urging churches to address the needs of uprooted people in their own communities, and in 1997 it adopted a major policy statement and called upon the churches to join in an "Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People."

Since then, the situation has deteriorated. Governments have devised more sophisticated ways of preventing would-be asylum-seekers and migrants from reaching their borders. Xenophobia, racism and hatred of the stranger are increasing in all regions of the world, with increasing displays of hostility and even violence toward foreigners. The international community has yet to respond adequately to meet the needs of those who are displaced by violence but remain within their country's borders. Some governments have gone so far as to suggest that the 1951 Refugee Convention is outdated and needs to be revised to make it even more restrictive. The UNHCR is increasingly subject to contradictory pressures from its member governments and civil society: host governments call for adequate assistance to refugees on their territory; donor governments seek to reduce expenditures and urge repatriation as soon as possible; human rights groups press for more vigorous defense of the rights of uprooted people; and others, especially the churches, call for the UNHCR to exercise more energetically the moral authority of its office.

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva, 26-29 September 2000, therefore:

extended its congratulations to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and her staff for the dedicated work they have done for refugees, migrants and internally displaced people over the past fifty years;

urged the UNHCR to remain a beacon of hope and an uncompromising defender of the rights of those who are forcibly displaced from their communities because of violence, persecution, human rights abuses, and war;

assured UNHCR of the continuing support of the churches as it works to uphold and to strengthen its mandate to protect asylum-seekers and refugees;

called on governments to make available the necessary resources to enable UNHCR to fulfill its mandate and to provide leadership to the international community in this field;

reaffirmed its support for the principles of the 1951 Convention on Refugees and its 1967 protocol as the foundation stone of international refugee law;

urged governments to adhere to the spirit and the letter of these laws in extending protection to those who are in need of it;

called upon the churches to use the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the UNHCR to raise awareness about the plight of uprooted people in their communities and to seek ways to ensure that their rights and dignity are respected, and their basic needs are met.

13.6 Resolution on Jerusalem Final Status Negotiations

Recalling the appeal of the WCC Eighth Assembly (Harare, 1998) that negotiations on the future status of Jerusalem should "be

undertaken without further delay and considered to be part of rather than a product of a comprehensive settlement for the region;"

Noting that negotiations on the final status on Jerusalem have begun; and

Sharing the conviction expressed by Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches and Christian Communities in Jerusalem in their statement of 26 September 2000 "that the political negotiators (must) take all necessary steps to (conclude them in a way that would) best ensure true peace with true justice and security for the 'two peoples and three religions' of this land – Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims alike."

The Executive Committee, meeting in Geneva, 26-29 September 2000:

expressed its appreciation for the comprehensive analysis of issues related to the present final status negotiations contained in the document, "Background paper on the Status of Jerusalem – December 1998 to Present," prepared by International Relations staff, and commends it to the churches and ecumenical bodies for study and appropriate action;

commended the initiatives taken in follow-up to the Statement on the Status of Jerusalem adopted by the Eighth Assembly;

firmly believed that Jerusalem can be a source of peace, stability and coexistence rather than of division and conflict that destroy human dignity and hope;

reaffirmed the principles contained in that statement as particularly relevant in the context of the present negotiations;

remained convinced of the urgency of pursuing negotiations on Jerusalem based on these principles;

encouraged the parties to have the courage to abandon narrow, exclusive claims in favor of efforts to build an open, inclusive and shared city where free access to Holy Places and freedom of worship is assured for people of all faiths;

reiterated its conviction "that the solution to the question of Jerusalem is in the first place the responsibility of the parties directly involved, but that the Christian churches and the Jewish and Muslim religious communities have a central role to play in relation to (the) negotiations;"

welcomed in this connection the recent initiatives taken by Heads of Churches of Jerusalem and the supportive steps taken by church leaders in the USA; and

urged all member churches

- to bring the WCC's Eighth Assembly Statement on the Status of Jerusalem to the attention of their governments;
- to speak out boldly and in unison for the application of these principles; and
- to remain constant in prayer and in solidarity with the local churches for a just peace in Jerusalem and for the whole of the Middle East.

14. ACTION BY CHURCHES TOGETHER (ACT)

Ms. Jacques and Mr. Thor-Arne Prois, Coordinator of ACT, introduced recent developments in ACT (Action by Churches Together). ACT has increasingly become an effective ecumenical instrument for responding to emergencies. There is a proposal to change the governance structure to make it more dynamic and flexible. Because of legal requirements in Switzerland, a General Assembly must be established so that ACT can be registered as an international alliance.

Based on a variety of criteria, professional as well as church / agency and geographical / North / South representation, it is proposed that the ACT Executive Committee serve as a nomination committee for the ACT Emergency Committee. The ACT Emergency Committee will be elected by the General Assembly.

The Directors of the WCC Cluster on Relations and of the LWF World Service will still be ex officio members of both committees. But it is proposed that their present role in the management of ACT be terminated, and that the ACT Coordinator position be upgraded to Director.

Discussions are going on between churches and agencies with regard to ecumenical discipline. Among the issues to be dealt with are the following:

- A national church or church council will always have a role to play in any given emergency, though not always a lead role;

- Involvement from international ACT members in an emergency should be based on values like sensitivity to the role of the

national ACT member, accompaniment and an objective of building local capacities;

- ACT implementing members are not only accountable to the donors, but likewise to their constituencies;

- It is recommended that the ACT Executive Committee, based on certain criteria and an agreed procedure, be given the authority to take the final decision on who are going to be implementing partners on behalf of the ACT alliance in a given emergency.

- As an alliance working ecumenically in emergencies to assist people suffering after a disaster, ACT partners are obliged to cooperate closely, using available resources even if it is difficult at times.

ACT is expanding rapidly. Within the ecumenical family, there is a growing reliance upon ACT to assist in fundraising or in coordinating a response in emergencies.

One of the most important issues is the transition from relief/reconstruction to sustainable long-term development.

The report was referred to the Program Sub-Committee (see p. 69 below).

15. ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

Ms. Jacques introduced this proposed new mechanism for common action, emphasizing that it is the result of a long consultative process. The proposal had been discussed by the Executive

Committee in March 2000 and by several commissions and advisory groups. It was also a major item during the WCC round table discussions in April 2000 and in the HOAN (Heads of Agencies Network) meeting in May 2000.

Ms. Jacques then referred to the green booklet "Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance: A New Mechanism for Common Action," which had been translated into four languages and widely distributed. More than one hundred responses have been received so far, almost all expressing great enthusiasm and expectations from this new initiative.

Some areas of concerns are:

- Economic justice/poverty/globalization/trade;
- Good governance/democracy/human rights/corruption/freedom of expression;
- Life ethics/death penalty;
- Militarization/arms control;
- HIV/AIDS
- Rights of women/children/indigenous peoples/migrants.

The founding meeting of the Alliance will be held 7-9 December 2000. Agencies and church-related organizations have committed themselves to provide the necessary funds. An Advocacy Office will be set up in the Ecumenical Center. It will be responsible to the WCC and to the Advocacy Working Group.

In the **discussion** the question of the relationship between ACT and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance was raised. It was explained that the work of ACT is limited to dealing with emergencies while the EAA will deal with a much broader area of concerns.

16. ENI INCORPORATION UNDER SWISS LAW

The document titled "Incorporation of Ecumenical News International as an Association under Swiss Law" was presented and a request made that the Sub-Committee on Program recommend to the Executive Committee that it endorse the proposal that ENI become a non-profit making association under Swiss law. It was noted that this proposal has already been received and reviewed by the other partners of ENI. It was reminded that the association hoped to be constituted as of January 1, 2001.

The Sub-Committee stressed the need for clarity about the role of ENI, its relationship to the sponsoring agencies and their role in setting editorial guidelines.

In response, a memo from ENI staff was presented which pointed to the section of the "incorporation document" which clarifies the link between the proposed association, the sponsoring organizations, and the process of setting editorial guidelines. The editorial guidelines were also seen.

The Sub-Committee **recommended**, therefore, and the Executive Committee agreed

to endorse the proposal that ENI become a non-profit making association under Swiss Law.

17. REPORT OF THE PROGRAM SUB-COMMITTEE

Dr. Marion Best, Moderator of the Program Sub-Committee, presented the report of the Program Sub-Committee.

17.1 Introduction

Using as an entry point the activity reports presented by the Cluster directors, the Program Sub-Committee had a long discussion in anticipation of the forthcoming meeting of the Program Committee. Here are some of the results of this discussion:

- Cluster directors are encouraged to continue to use the same format in preparing activity reports. They are also invited to identify and spell out in these reports the areas where they need advice on concrete action by the Executive Committee. The reports, with few changes/adaptations, could also be used for reporting to the Program Committee.

- Evaluation should be the next step in the planning process. The Program Sub-Committee noted with satisfaction that plans are being made to use the Week of Meetings for evaluating the activities of the year 2000. It was stressed that evaluation should be realistic, comprehensive, and constructively critical. It should be attempted from various perspectives (team/cluster/council; staff/governing bodies/constituency). The Executive Committee could be instrumental for a formative evaluation, while the Program Committee should be the place for evaluating the effectiveness of an activity.

- The Sub-Committee suggested an informal gathering with moderators of the consultative bodies within the framework of the Program Committee. The aim would be to clarify the relationship and expectations of these two groups.

- Cluster directors and the Deputy General Secretary are encouraged to screen the reports of the consultative bodies and

prepare for the attention of the Program Committee a list with matters needing policy decisions.

- Further consideration should be given to the format of the reports of the consultative bodies.

The Program Sub-Committee had also the opportunity to meet with Christina Minezac, the Council's new Human Resources Manager. In a brief presentation, she introduced the actual stage of preparations towards articulating a "human resources policy." Although the immediate purpose of this exercise seems to be a new compensation system, in fact a strategic approach to human resources is being attempted, emphasizing the need for continuous evaluation, encouragement of staff training and development, as well as a permanent search for new ways of human resources deployment. The immediate link between a human resources strategy and the task of the Program Sub-Committee would be a constant concern for the relationship between planned activities and available human resources.

Unfortunately, a similar presentation planned with the help of staff from Finance and Administration was not possible because of lack of time.

17.2 Activity Reports

The Executive Committee received the activity reports presented by Cluster directors, with the following comments:

17.2.1 Cluster on Relations

- Strengthening and deepening the fellowship should not be considered as an objective and task of only one team, i.e., the team on Church and Ecumenical Relations, but rather as a major focus calling for a Council-wide response and involvement. The Program Committee should take this concern seriously, and the attention of all consultative bodies (commissions and advisory groups) should be drawn to this constitutional priority.

- The points raised at the last Executive Committee meeting with regard to inter-religious relations (cf. Minutes pp. 30-31, 34-36) need to be sharpened. The Council should work on guidelines/criteria, in order to facilitate churches' participation in inter-religious/multi-faith events. The Council should engage in issue-oriented conversations with resource persons from other religions, in order to articulate responses to issues of common concerns.

- It is important to continue and deepen the Christian-Muslim dialogue, especially within the context of communal tensions. This should be a task shared between the teams on Inter-religious Dialogue and International Relations.

- The efforts towards establishing regional networking and cooperation with REOs are affirmed as a task to be shared by all teams.

- The importance of creating "ecumenical spaces" in the regions is also strongly affirmed as a new way of working with churches and ecumenical partners.

- There is a call for increased attention to racism and xenophobia coming especially from the network for the uprooted people.

- It is suggested to change some wording in order to avoid misunderstandings (e.g. "inter-religious education," "indigenous spirituality").

17.2.2 Cluster on Issues and Themes

- Staff is encouraged to further discuss across teams and clusters issues of wider concern that have been identified in the report (ecumenical formation of clergy and laity in leadership positions; mutuality in partnership; emerging forms of racism and xenophobia in Europe; ecumenism and post-modernism).

- Dialogue with Bretton Woods Institutions is affirmed. It is suggested, however, to elaborate guidelines that could be presented to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

With regard to the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocacy Network (EDAN), the Executive Committee:

- *received* with appreciation the progress report on a program that has emerged at the WCC Assembly in Harare;

- *welcomed* the new working style based on the principle of ecumenical partnership, and affirmed the proposed methodology;

- *noted* the proposal of the Network for a Padare offering at the 2002 Central Committee meeting, and a special plenary at the 2003 Central Committee meeting, and

- e*ncouraged* the Program Committee to continue inviting to its meetings a representative of the Network.

With regard to Mission and Evangelism, the Executive Committee

- *endorsed* the proposal of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism that the WCC organize a world mission conference before the next Assembly and forward this proposal to the Central Committee.

17.3 Preparation of Central Committee

The Executive Committee received with appreciation the document related to the preparation of the Central Committee, and offered the following suggestions:

17.3.1 Padare Offerings

- It was noted that the padare will not be "on the record" for the media. This means that if journalists attend a padare, it will be for background information only. They will not report on the padare nor quote people who speak during it. There will instead be press briefings on subjects of interest to the media.

- The padare focusing on mission should include opportunity for discussion of mission in a secularized, multi-religious context such as Germany. What can we learn about the challenges faced by German churches in this context and their response?

- It was recommended that the wording in the reference to the 1910 Edinburgh mission conference be changed to reflect a

more inclusive reading of events outside the "Protestant world" that have also "given birth" to the one ecumenical movement.

17.3.2 Plenary on Economy

- The role of communication and the impact it has on the lives and destinies of peoples in various contextual situations should be highlighted.

17.3.3 Plenary on Europe

- The background documents should include a presentation of the changing realities in Europe.

- It would also be important to find ways of spelling out/provoking discussion and reflection on issues related to identities and particularities of European peoples and nations in the present context.

17.3.4 Plenary and Discussion on DOV

- The methodology of the plenary (especially the diversity of activities and the key role assigned to the "facilitator") should be reviewed.

- The suggested exercise with the postcards may not be sufficient. Ways should be found of engaging Central Committee members to offer both their conceptual and their analytical contributions to the debate.

17.4 Developments within ACT

The Sub-Committee on Program had the opportunity to discuss recent developments within ACT and proposals for changes in the ACT governing structure with Thor-Arne Prois, ACT Coordinator.

The Sub-Committee on Program encouraged the preparation of legal decisions to be taken by the Executive Committee, with the following remarks:

- In preparation of such decisions, ACT communication officers and WCC Communication should prepare a presentation to the attention of the Central Committee members, informing them and enabling them to better understand ACT's mission and activities.

- Ways of communication should be improved to make more visible the link between the WCC and ACT, and to highlight the Council's leading role in this ecumenical partnership.

- Member churches' knowledge about, understanding and ownership of ACT should be increased through communication and education.

18. REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Bishop Huber, Moderator of the Finance Sub-Committee, presented the report as follows:

18.1 Audited Financial Report 1999

The results were as presented at the March 2000 Executive Committee meeting. The results showed a net operating surplus of CHF 748,000 which was transferred to the Council's General Reserve. It needs to be put in the context of excellent investment results which are responsible for the surplus. Attention was drawn to the innovation of the "transfers analysis" which has been developed and may be integrated into the future Finance Reports.

The Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed

to approve as published and distributed the Audited Financial Statements.

18.2 Results to 31st August 2000 and Forecast for the Year 2000

The results to the end of August indicate that Dividends and Interest and Exchange Gains and Losses leave the Council, in financial terms, specifically vulnerable in 2000. Undesignated Income is ahead of 1998 and 1999, but not achieving the planned budget.

Publishing and Production expenditure is well below budget. This is likely to have adverse repercussions for the budget for 2001, since certain parts of the intensive house-wide publications program had to be postponed. At another occasion the Sub-Committee will compare Publications Income and Expenditure in more detail.

Turning to the forecast for the year, the overall results are forecast at CHF 778,000 deficit. In addition, Dividends and Interest are

unlikely to meet their target, and it will be necessary to meet the shortfall from the appropriate reserves.

The problem of designation versus undesignation is effectively responsible for this deficit. Therefore staff will try to use designated funds to decrease the forecasted deficit after consultation with the donors.

The Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed

that additional efforts be taken to address the imbalance between designated and undesignated contributions. It acknowledged the methodology of the conditional budget used during the year but noted that the under-performance of contributions income rendered this effort insufficient. The Sub-Committee thanked the staff for all efforts undertaken so far to reach the goal of a maximum deficit of CHF 50,000. It is aware of the difficulty of realizing this target, but emphasized the necessity to come as near as possible to this goal.

18.3 Financial Scenarios for the years 2001-2003

The Sub Committee discussed best and worst case scenarios for the years in view. The Sub-Committee noted that the scenarios demonstrate the importance of the membership campaign for the financial equilibrium of the Council. It was confirmed by staff that the final budget for the year 2001 will be presented to the Officers in December, then to the Executive Committee and the Central Committee meetings in January 2001.

18.4 Activity-based Costing

The Sub-Committee encouraged staff to further develop the "Activity-based Costing" concept and integrate the result into the planning cycle with a view to implementation in 2001.

18.5 WCC Pension Fund

The Sub-Committee received a report on the problem which arose at the closing of the 1999 accounts and the introduction of a revision of Accounting Regulations. The revision would have entailed recording a significant liability of the Council towards the Pension Fund. While this was dealt with satisfactorily at the time of the closing of accounts, the issue needs to be dealt with in the context of the wider economic situation and the future of the Council.

The Sub-Committee discussed the main features of a Defined Benefits scheme – largely an innovation brought in by international organizations - and compared it with a Defined Contributions scheme increasingly used by both international and local organizations in Switzerland and Europe-wide.

The Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed

- *that a feasibility study be conducted by a party independent of the Pension Fund as well as of WCC. This would allow all issues to be properly investigated and presented to staff, Pension Fund Board and Governing Bodies of the WCC, prior to any decision being taken;*

- *that the WCC include contributions at the level of 7 + 4 = 11% to the Pension Fund in the 2001 budget.*

18.6 Staffing and Nominations

The Sub-Committee adopted the organization chart which shows the "before" and "after" situations, noting that the number of people in the Finance Services and Administration Cluster will not be changed as a result. The Sub-Committee affirmed the direction suggested by the proposed staffing changes which lead to the new position of a "Projects Manager."

18.7 Ethical Investments

The Sub-Committee noted that the growth in awareness about the concept of Ethical Investment made it possible to further engage in practical implementation of WCC policies. The Endowment Fund of the Council is managed by Banque Pictet who holds the view that ethics are a necessary component to long-term financial success. In addition, Banque Lombard Odier, which manages the larger General Fund for the WCC, has established a Sustainable Investment Team which performs detailed screening processes.

The Sub-Committee **recommended** and the Executive Committee agreed

that the proposals regarding future policy and implementation be adopted at an additional cost of CHF13,500 and that the monitoring of these be referred to the Investment Advisory Group.

This view has to be communicated to the respective banks.

18.8 Income Monitoring and Development

The Sub-Committee heard reports of the Round Table Meeting and the Membership Contributions Campaign and encouraged the continuation of these efforts.

18.9 Compensation Study

The Sub-Committee received a report on a study that reviews the salary and remuneration system in the light of the organizational changes brought about by the Common Understanding and Vision process.

The study was adjourned pending the appointment of a new Human Resources director who is now in place.

The financial issues involved include

- the financial impact of the new remuneration system,
- staff development,
- increase in the cost of living.

The Sub-Committee would like to make the Executive Committee aware of the likely financial implications of the new remuneration plan. It will resume the discussion after the presentation of concrete proposals at a later occasion.

18.10 Bossey Renovation

The project is designed to restore the building to meet more adequately the requirements of an academic institution and a conference center. The options available were to renovate the facilities completely or vacate them. Given the centrality of the Institute to the life of the Council, the renovation at a cost of some CHF 6.5 million was adopted already at an earlier occasion.

A funding file is being generated and a construction loan has been obtained at favorable rates to cover almost the entire cost of the project. The funding file includes attractive parceling of items – such as conference rooms or communications facilities – to appeal to a variety of donors. The project is likely to last for about 20 months, starting in June 2000.

The Sub-Committee received the report and expressed its hopes that the renovated building will serve effectively its ecumenical mandate and that the funding efforts will be successful.

19. REPORT OF THE STAFFING AND NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

On behalf of Ms. Justice Sophia Adinyira, who unfortunately could not attend the Executive Committee meeting, Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick presented, in a closed session, the report of the Sub-Committee as follows:

The Executive Committee authorised the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointments, contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding

only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts or contract extensions.

19.1 Appointments

Ecumenical Institute Bossey

Fr. Dr. Ioan Sauca (Romania, Romanian Orthodox Church [Eastern]), as Director, for four years, from 1 January 2001 (will complete 10.7 yrs).

Cluster on Finance, Service and Administration

Income, Monitoring and Development

Mr. Michiel Hardon (The Netherlands, Netherlands Reformed Church), as Director, for four years, from 1 January 2001.

Cluster on Issues and Themes

Faith & Order

Dr. Tamara Grdzelidze (Georgia, Orthodox Church of Georgia [Eastern]), as Executive Secretary, for four years, from 1 January 2001.

Vikarin Kersten Storch (Germany, EKD, Lutheran) as Executive Secretary, for four years, from 1 August 2001, to be endorsed by the Council of the EKD.

Mission & Evangelism

Rev. Carlos Ham (Cuba, Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba), as Executive Secretary for Evangelism, for four years, from 1 March 2001.

19.2 Contract Extensions

All the contract extensions listed below are for three years unless otherwise stated.

Cluster on Communication

Public Information

Rev. Robert E. Scott (Aotearoa-New Zealand, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia), Cluster Communication Officer, for 15 months, until retirement age, from 1 October 2001 (will complete 14.3 yrs).

Ms. Sarah Speicher (USA, Church of the Brethren), Cluster Communication Officer, from 1 January 2002 (will complete 8.0 yrs).

Publications & Documentation

Mr. Jan Kok (Netherlands, The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands), Publication Manager, from 1 January 2002 (will complete 31.7 yrs).

Cluster on Issues and Themes

Justice, Peace and Creation

Ms. Marilia Schüller (Brazil, Methodist Church in Brazil), Executive Secretary, Women under Racism, from 1 January 2002 (will complete 13.0 yrs).

Church & Ecumenical Relations

Ms. Teny Pirri-Simonian (Lebanon, Armenian Apostolic Church [Oriental]), Executive Secretary, from 1 January 2002 (will complete 18.1 yrs).

International Relations

Ms. Salpy Eskidjian (Cyprus, Armenian Apostolic Church [Oriental]), Executive Secretary, from 1 January 2002 (will complete 10 yrs).

ACT Coordinating Office

Ms. Elsa Moreno Cardenas (Colombia, Roman Catholic Church), Appeals Officer for Latin America, from 1 January 2001 (will complete 4.2 yrs).

Ms. Jessie Kgoroeadira (South Africa, Roman Catholic Church), Executive Secretary, from 14 May 2001 (will complete 5.0 yrs).

Mr. Nils Carstensen (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark), Communications Officer, for one year (in order

to conform to the WCC Regulations), from 1 October 2002 (will complete 7.0 yrs).

Mr John Nduna (Zambia, Church of Zambia [Anglican]), Appeals Officer for Africa, from 1 August 2001 (will complete 5.0 yrs).

Ms. Leila Dzaferovic (Bosnia Herzegovina, Muslim), Appeals Officer for Europe, from 1 July 2001 (will complete 4.0 yrs) (in order to conform to the WCC Regulations).

Ecumenical News International (ENI)

Mr. Edmond Doogue (Ireland, United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom), Editor, from 1 January 2000, to be confirmed by the ENI Board on 3 November 2000.

19.3 Internal Transfers

Cluster on Finance, Service and Administration

Computer and Information Technology Services

Ms. Carol Abel (UK, Church of Ireland [Anglican]), be appointed as Project Manager, from 1 October 2000 (will complete 10.0 yrs).

Ms. Catherine Inoubli (France, Roman Catholic) be appointed as IT Operations Co-ordinator, from 1 October 2000.

19.4 Vacancies

Ecumenical Institute Bossey

Lecturer

Cluster on Finance, Service and Administration

Finance

Finance Manager

Computer and Information Technology Services

IT Manager

Income Monitoring and Development

Income Development Officer (based in the USA)

Cluster on Issues and Themes

Education and Ecumenical Formation

Executive Secretary for Education and Ecumenical Formation

The Executive Committee authorised the Officers to fill urgent vacancies that must be filled prior to its next meeting.

19.5 Ratification of Officers' Decision by Postal Vote

Cluster on Finance, Services and Administration

Human Resources/Personnel

Ms. Christina Minezac (Switzerland, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]), Human Resources Manager, for four years, from 1 September 2000.

19.6 Consultants

It is reported that the following consultants were appointed by the General Secretary since the last Executive Committee meeting in February 2000:

General Secretariat

Dr Peter Bouteneff (USA, Orthodox Church in America [Eastern]), Consultant to the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, for three years, from 1 September 2000.

Cluster on Finance, Services and Administration

Director's Office

Mr. Jean-Nicolas Bazin (France, Reformed Church of France), Consultant, Information Technology, for three years, from 1 September 2000.

Contract Extension

Income, Monitoring and Development

Mr. John Lindner ((USA, Presbyterian Church USA)), Consultant, Income Development and Planning, Bossey and WCC Special Project (USA), for nine months, from 1 January 2001 (will complete 2.8 yrs).

FOR INFORMATION

19.7 Departures

It is reported that the following staff members have left, or will leave, the service of the World Council of Churches on the dates indicated:

Ecumenical Institute Bossey

Dr. Heidi Hadsell-do Nascimento (USA, Presbyterian Church USA), Director, on 31 August 2001 (will complete 4.0 yrs).

Cluster on Finance, Service and Administration

Finance

Ms. Irène Duraffourd (France, Roman Catholic Church), Chief Accountant, on 31 August 2000 (completed 22.1 yrs).

Computer & Information Technology Services

Mr. David Pozzi-Johnson (USA, Evangelical Covenant Church in America), CIS Manager, on 31 August 2000 (completed 13.0 yrs).

Cluster on Issues and Themes

Faith & Order

Rev. Dr. Dagmar Heller (Germany, United [EKD]), Executive Secretary, on 31 October 2000 (will complete 8.5 yrs).

Education & Ecumenical Formation

Ms. Edna Orteza (Philippines, United Church of Christ in the Philippines), Executive Secretary, on 31 July 2000 (completed 5.5 yrs).

Dr. Gert Rüppell (Finland, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland), Executive Secretary, on 31 January 2002 (will complete 7.0 yrs).

On behalf of the Executive Committee the Moderator expressed appreciation for the valuable work of the above mentioned staff members who have left the Council.

19.8 Death Announcement

Cluster on Communication

Publications & Documentation

Mr Marlin VanElderen (USA, Christian Reformed Church in North America), Executive Editor, deceased on 12 June 2000.

19.9 Extension of the Contract of the General Secretary

In a closed session the Executive Committee discussed the following proposal by the Officers:

- that the process for the election of a new General Secretary be delayed for one year, and that the contract of the General Secretary be extended for one additional year.

The first reason for this proposal is a practical one. It does not seem realistic to envisage that, in its meeting in August 2002, the Central Committee could work responsibly on three issues of great importance for the future of the WCC and of the ecumenical movement, i.e.: (a) the first full report of the Special Commission; (b) the discussion on the theme and venue of the next Assembly; and (c) the election of the General Secretary.

It is suggested that in this meeting, the Central Committee focus mainly on the first full report of the Special Commission. At the end of the initial three-year period that constitutes the initial mandate of the Special Commission, it will be extremely important to receive

and discuss its report with due attention and concentration, free from distractions which accompany any election process.

The Central Committee could also discuss in this meeting (2002) the procedures for the election of a General Secretary and appoint the Selection Committee.

The discussion on the Assembly theme and venue, as well as the appointment of the Assembly Planning Committee should be postponed to the next year (2003).

The second reason is related to the whole process of the Assembly preparation. Again, it is a matter that will have to be considered very carefully, independent of the present proposal. According to decisions already taken by partner ecumenical organizations, there will be a concentration of ecumenical assemblies in the years 2002-2004 (PCC, LWF, CEC, WARC). Instead of envisaging the WCC Assembly for the second part of 2005, it would be perfectly possible to hold it in the very first part of 2006.

From the perspective of the ongoing discussions on coordinating assemblies or organizing common assemblies, it might be beneficial to envision a longer interval between the assemblies of partner ecumenical organizations and the WCC Assembly. The financial advantages of this proposal should be explored.

The timetable for assembly preparation could then be structured along the following general lines: Assembly discussion on theme and venue, appointment of the Assembly Planning Committee (August 2003), meeting of the Assembly Planning Committee in which the new General Secretary should participate (early 2004),

report of the Assembly Planning Committee to the Central Committee (August 2004).

If the two first arguments are of a practical nature, **the third reason** in favor of the proposal is the most essential. As mentioned above, the Special Commission is expected to present its report in 2002. In this very meeting, the Central Committee will be in a position to "receive" the report and discuss the eventual implications and steps for follow-up. It would be unrealistic to expect that definitive decisions would be taken during the Central Committee meeting itself.

The Central Committee will have (a) to formulate its reaction to the proposals of the Special Commission, (b) to set the appropriate mechanisms in case of a commonly agreed follow-up, and especially in case of eventual constitutional or other changes in the Council's life, and (c) to decide whether the mandate of the Special Commission should be extended/renewed, and if so what the task entrusted to the Commission should be. Obviously, the time between the Central Committee meetings in 2002 and 2003 will be needed to formalize this response and prepare for the actions by the Central Committee.

The following question emerge: Is it responsible to expect the Central Committee to fulfill its task in a moment of change in the Staff Leadership? Is it realistic to anticipate a change in the Staff Leadership in what could be considered as the most decisive moment of a long process?

Most of the concerns included in the agenda of the Special Commission constitute a natural continuation of the CUV process. The Central Committee ("this" Central Committee) needs the

assistance and advice of a General Secretary who has accompanied the CUV process since its inception and has brought it to a successful conclusion.

It is clear that what has been very often qualified as an "Orthodox crisis" has gone through a long gestation period preceding the Harare Assembly. The General Secretary has followed the matter since its inception. His accumulated experience, ecumenical memory and deep knowledge of the subject will be needed in the coming period.

For all the above mentioned reasons the present proposal is made, anticipating the following schedule:

- Procedures for the election of General Secretary and Nomination of the Selection Committee (August 2002);
- Election of General Secretary (August 2003);
- New General Secretary takes office (January 2004).

Recommendation

In light of the above the Executive Committee **recommends** to the Central Committee

- *to delay for one year the process for the election of a new General Secretary and*
- *to extend for one additional year the contract of the General Secretary.*

Dr. Raiser thanked the Executive Committee for their expression of confidence and declared his willingness to accept a possible extension of his contract for one year.

On behalf of the Executive Committee the Moderator expressed his thanks to the General Secretary for his willingness to accept a possible extension of his contract for one year.

20. INVITATION TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR 2002 MEETING

On behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, the Korean Methodist Church and with the support of the National Council of Churches in Korea, Prof. Dr. Samuel Lee extended an invitation to hold the 2002 meeting of the Central Committee in Korea. He pointed out that a written invitation would be sent to the WCC before the next Central Committee meeting in Berlin.

Dr. Raiser thanked Prof. Lee for the invitation. He noted that the WCC would give it careful consideration, especially in view of the additional costs that would be involved for a meeting held outside Geneva.

21. CELEBRATION OF VISSER 'T HOOFT'S 100th ANNIVERSARY

On Thursday evening, September 28th, the WCC honored its first General Secretary, Dr. Willem Visser 't Hooft, with a special celebration. A video presentation recalling some of the highlights of Visser 't Hooft's ecumenical career was followed by an interview with Dr. Philip Potter who was WCC General Secretary from 1972-

1984. A special exhibition was also opened in the entrance hall of the Ecumenical Center.

22. CLOSING ACTION

The Moderator thanked members of the Executive Committee for their participation in the meeting. He also expressed appreciation to the General Secretary and other staff in the preparation and conduct of this meeting.

The Moderator adjourned the meeting on Friday, 29 September 2000, at 12.30 hours and offered the closing prayer.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Officers:	H.H. Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia	(Moderator)
	Dr. Marion Best	(Vice-Moderator)
	Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser	(General Secretary)
Members:	Rev. Yadessa Daba	
	Rev. Inamar Correa de Souza	
	Ms. Donnalie E.C. Edwards-Cabey	
	Dean Anders Gadegaard	
	Bishop Dr. Wolfgang Huber	
	Ms. Jana Kalinova	
	Ms. Carmencita Karagdag	
	H.G. Mar Cyril Aphrem Karim	
	Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick	
	Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky	
	Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa	
	Prof. Dr. Samuel Lee	
	Rev. Dr. Maake S.J. Masango	
	H.G. Archbishop Nifon of Targoviste	
	Rt.Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus	
	Very Rev. Dr. Georges Tsetsis	
Ex Officio:	Fr. Dr. K. M. George	
Apologies:	Ms. Justice Sophia Adinyira	(Vice-Moderator)
	Rev. Dr. Hilarion Alfeyev	
	Ms. Abigail O. Ogunsanya	
	Rev. Dr. Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere	
	Bishop McKinley Young	
Substitute:	Rev. Mikhail Gundyaev	

Staff: Mr. Robert Christeler
Ms. Kristine Greenaway
Ms. Geneviève Jacques
Rev. Dr. Sam Kobia
Mr. Georges Lemopoulos

Part-time
Ms. Jeanne Becher
Rev. Dwain Epps
Ms. Christina Minezac
Mr. Hubert van Beek

Minute-Writer: Ms. Irmhild Reichen-Young

Administration: Mr. Gerard Scarff
Ms. Ursula Zierl

APPENDIX II

MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Program Sub-Committee

Dr. Marion Best	Moderator
Ms. Inamar Correa de Souza	
Ms. Jana Kalinova	
H.G. Mar Cyril Aphrem Karim	
Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa	
Rev. Dr. Maake S.J. Masango	
Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus	
Very Rev. Dr. Georges Tsetsis	

Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee

Ms. Justice Sophia Adinyira	Moderator	(absent)
Rev. Dr. Hilarion Alfeyev		(absent)
Rev. Yadessa Daba		
Ms. Donnalie E.C. Edwards-Cabey		
Dean Anders Gadegaard		
Ms. Carmencita Karagdag		
Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick	Acting Moderator	

Finance Sub-Committee

Bishop Dr. Wolfgang Huber	Moderator
Very Rev. Leonid Kirshkovsky	
Prof. Dr. Samuel Lee	
Archbishop Nifon of Targoviste	
Ms. Abigail O. Ogunsanya	(absent)
Rev. Dr. Ilaiti Sevati Tuwere	(absent)
Bishop McKinley Young	(absent)

APPENDIX III

Membership

A Discussion Paper

The Executive Committee at its meeting from 29 February to 3 March 2000 agreed that staff be asked to bring to the next meeting of the Executive Committee a first draft of a discussion/reflection paper on the issue of membership. This paper should draw on the discussion in the Sub-Committees of the Special Commission as well as on other discussions presently taking place (such as for example with LWF). The paper should also be made available to the Special Commission at its next plenary session in October 2000.

1. The Present Model of Membership

In his book "*The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches,*" Dr W.A. Visser 't Hooft explains how the model of membership on which the WCC is based since its inception in 1948 came into being. The initial proposal (1936) was a system of regional representation of the churches in which North America, the United Kingdom and the European Continent were the main "regions," while places were reserved for the Orthodox churches and for areas not otherwise represented (e.g. South Africa, Australasia); representatives of the "younger churches" would be appointed on the advice of the International Missionary Council. This regional approach was criticized by the advocates of the confessional principle who proposed (in 1945) a representation based on the confessional belonging of the churches. The debate on the pros and cons of the two models led to an agreement to take both the regional (or territorial) and confessional factors into

consideration, i.e., a model in which the member churches would be the basic units. The defenders of this solution argued that the exclusive implementation of the regional principle would have resulted in a world council of national or regional councils, and the confessional approach would have led to a world council of confessional families or communions. What appeared to be a compromise was in fact a deliberate choice: the member churches would send their delegates to the Assembly (according to the allocation of seats established by the Central Committee) and the Assembly would elect the Central Committee from among the delegates. The provisional committee, which decided in 1947 to submit this proposal to the founding Assembly in 1948 (where it was adopted), also established the main requirements for membership as reflected until today in the Constitution and Rules.

Note: The regional concept as it was current in those days may look very odd now. One should bear in mind however that it was largely the basis for the early ecumenical bodies such as the IMC and Life and Work, the forerunners of the WCC.

2. Previous Reflection on Membership

At the Consultation in Sofia in 1981 on Orthodox Involvement in the WCC it was recommended that a reference to Baptism should be included in the Basis of the Council or at least in the criteria for the admission of new members. On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Central Committee referred this issue to Faith and Order (in 1981). The study and survey done by Faith and Order resulted in a number of considerations which all suggested that it would not be wise to pursue the proposal. Some of the main arguments were that the Basis is not meant to be a creed or confession of faith, that the Council should not assume sacramental

marks, and that examining the baptismal teaching of new member churches would, in effect, lead to judging matters concerning ecclesiological self-understanding, which would be in contradiction with the Toronto Statement.

3. The Context of a Renewed Reflection

The need to review the issue of membership in the present stage of the Council's life has emerged from several processes which are all inter-related:

3.1 The review of the criteria for membership which was conducted in 1994-95 and led to some changes in the Rules, which were subsequently approved by the Eighth Assembly. In the course of this review, a paper on the Meaning of Membership was presented to the Central Committee, which recommended that its contents be incorporated into the CUV document (paragraphs 3.7.1 to 3.7.9 of the Policy Statement on CUV).

3.2 The CUV process which has brought fundamental issues of WCC membership to the fore.

3.3 The discussion on Orthodox participation and the work of the Special Commission.

3.4 The discussion with the Christian World Communions, in particular with the Lutheran World Federation.

3.5 The matter of membership contributions and financial responsibilities related to membership.

4. Some of the Issues Which Have Arisen

4.1 The CUV raises the basic question of the distinction between an *organization* (or institution) and a *fellowship*. The relationship between an organization and its constituency is usually defined in terms of membership with established criteria, requirements and responsibilities. In the case of the WCC, these are spelled out in Art. II of the Constitution and Art. I and II of the Rules. Within a fellowship, relationships are shaped and determined by concepts such as belonging, participation and accountability. The CUV document says: The WCC *has* a structure and organization – it *is* (or is meant to be) a fellowship. This would seem to suggest that in order to belong to the fellowship, a church must be in formal membership with the organization. The question that follows is whether this inter-relatedness of membership and belonging can be articulated in a different, new manner. In other words: are there other ways to belong to/ participate in the fellowship than formal membership in the organization?

4.2 CUV also raises the question of the Roman Catholic Church and Evangelical and Pentecostal churches which are not members of the Council. There is a recognition that the fellowship is not complete without their presence. The WCC is investing considerable time, energy and resources in nurturing, deepening and expanding the relationships with these churches, with the aim of widening the fellowship. The Council is cautious not to seek to draw them into membership, knowing that they have reservations regarding the present criteria and requirements. This begs the question how these churches can more fully belong to/participate in the fellowship without formal membership in the organization. Or is the latter in the final

analysis the only possible way? To what extent is the present understanding of membership an obstacle to widening the fellowship?

4.3 In the discussion on Orthodox participation, one of the issues regarding membership is the steadily growing number of WCC member churches, especially from the Protestant tradition. Several Protestant churches of the same denominational or confessional family may co-exist in a country and hold (or apply for) individual membership in the WCC. The growth in numbers has aggravated the Orthodox minority position and will continue to do so in the present structure, hence the search for new manners of representation and decision-making, and for alternative models and structures which are on the agenda of the Special Commission. More fundamentally, the question at stake here is ecclesiological and concerns the Council's constituency as a whole. It is interesting to note in this regard the understanding between the WCC and the Anglican Communion. The number of Anglican member churches can only increase through the creation of new Provinces, which requires the agreement of the Communion. A similar "safeguard" exists with the Old Catholic churches (the Union of Utrecht). Even churches that have broken with Rome stand little chance to become members of the WCC, because of the understanding with the Roman Catholic Church (what is meant here are more recent breakaways, not the churches of the Reformation).

In its discussion on the membership issue, Sub-Committee I of the Special Commission has come to the conclusion that the churches should continue to hold their membership in the WCC as per the current Rules, retaining their identity and independence, but that they should belong to

"family/affinity/groups" that will bring common concerns to the Council and work together to achieve joint representation in the governing bodies. Sub-Committee IV, on the other hand, has stated that the WCC cannot for very much longer continue to maintain a model based solely upon individual member churches each in its own right.

4.4 In the dialogue with some of the Christian World Communions (e.g. LWF, WARC) three questions related to membership have been identified: (a) simultaneous membership, i.e., the overlap in the constituency between the WCC and CWCs, (b) the participation of small churches which are members of the CWCs but do not qualify for WCC because of their size, and (c) whether CWCs should encourage those of their member churches which do qualify but are not yet members, to join the WCC.

4.5 The current efforts regarding membership contributions have also contributed to bringing out more sharply the difference between an institutional obligation (i.e. paying its fees) and the sign of commitment to a fellowship. It would seem that only a church which perceives the meaning of it being a member of the institution as belonging to the fellowship would look at the financial needs of that fellowship in the same terms as its own needs.

5. A Growing Contradiction

Beyond the above-mentioned aspects and questions is a yet more fundamental issue. The principle of membership based on individual, autonomous churches, which was most probably the appropriate choice at the time of the formation of the WCC (see

point 1), would now seem to begin contradicting the very purpose of the Council which is the search for visible unity and common witness. Membership is being increasingly perceived as a legitimization of the status of a member church as an independent body or denomination. Looked at it from that perspective, the Council would appear to be promoting fragmentation rather than unity.

6. Possible Ways Forward to Explore

6.1 More study and reflection is needed on the inter-relationship between organization (institution) and fellowship and, related to this, the inter-relationship between membership and belonging/participation. This raises the issue of the nature and understanding of the fellowship as a question prior to the meaning of membership. In much of the thinking so far the approach has been to try to spell out what it means to be a member church of the WCC, taking for granted a certain vision of the fellowship (e.g. the 1995 paper on the Meaning of Membership). It may well be that it has to be the other way around: to derive a new understanding of membership from a better perception of the nature of the fellowship.

6.2 Subsequently, the criteria and requirements for membership could be reviewed once more, with a view to including ecclesial criteria related to the concept of fellowship rather than to organizational or institutional considerations. This would raise the question how such new criteria would affect existing membership.

6.3 Churches of the same denomination or confession in a country or region could be encouraged to adhere to the Council together,

in the form of an association or federation (Art. II of the Constitution allows for this). Current examples of this model are for instance the Evangelical Church in Germany, the Swiss Protestant Federation, and the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India. A question which would need to be considered is whether this could be made a requirement for new applications and what this would imply for existing members. An objection that has already been heard is the danger of a diminishing commitment of churches as a consequence of such an "indirect" representation.

6.4 The implications for WCC membership of bilateral agreements such as Leuenberg, Porvoo, the Concordat between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church in the USA, COCU, etc. would deserve to be explored more intentionally.

6.5 The discussion with the CWCs on the issues of membership should be continued, as well as the reflection with the REOs on a possible new configuration of regional and global conciliar structures.

6.6 A prospective search might be initiated looking for alternative models of membership and participation and new ways of "being churches belonging together" other than the existing models of ecumenical organizations. Such a process should solicit the fullest participation of non-member churches, in particular (but not only) Pentecostals, and should be conducted free from any vested institutional interest.

7. The Special Commission

Any reflection on membership should be informed by the work of the Special Commission on this issue, which is one of its main agenda items. Inversely, the Special Commission may benefit from the ongoing discussion at the level of staff and governing bodies, of which this paper is a part.

8. Possible Next Steps

- Further development of this paper.
- Assessment of where the reflection on membership is after the report of the Special Commission to the Central Committee in January 2001, and decision on how the discussion should be carried on. It could be entrusted to the Special Commission or to a sub-group of the Executive or Central Committee.